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ABSTRACT

This paper presents findings of a 4-year study that examined the dynamics of educational change in 11 elementary and secondary schools that were adopting global education into their curricula. Data were obtained from informal observations, interviews with principals, and interviews with and surveys of teachers. Findings identified three kinds of goal orientations held by principals--focused, diffuse, or coping--that influenced the success of program implementation. The focused principals seemed to most clearly understand the meaning of global education and recognized its role in helping them achieve their own goals. The schools with focused principals came closest to bringing a global perspective to the curriculum. Other factors included the principal's leadership style and school district ethos. A conclusion is that real school improvement requires a major focus on helping people at the school site, particularly the principal, to clarify and develop their own vision and meanings. Contains 23 references. (LMI)

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THE GOAL ORIENTATION OF THE PRINCIPAL: A KEY FACTOR IN THE SUCCESS OR FAILURE OF SCHOOL CHANGE

A Report To the ASCD Conference

Chicago - March, 1994

by Kenneth Tye

The article that follows is excerpted from the presenter's book, Global Education: A Study of School Change, co-authored with Dr. Barbara Benham and published by SUNY Press. The book describes a four-year study of efforts by teachers at eleven elementary and secondary schools to infuse global perspectives into their curricula schoolwide. They were assisted in these efforts by outside change agents, staff members of the Center for Human Interdependence, a global education project affiliated with Chapman University in southern California. The primary focus of the study was on the dynamics of educational change--and resistance to change--and global education was the innovation selected for adoption by the teachers.

* * *

The literature of educational change has pointed consistently to the principal as a key person in the school improvement process, and the CHI study confirms that position. The principals of the eleven schools in the project played significant roles vis-a-vis the globalization of the curriculum at their schools. Three distinct **goal orientations** emerged as key factors in the ability of a school faculty to successfully integrate some global education objectives and activities into their teaching and into the curriculum of the school as a whole.

Leadership vs Administration

As a beginning point, it should be noted that one can be a school administrator without being a leader (the reverse can be true, also). The classic distinction made by James Lipham 30 years ago best explains the administration/leadership contrast. Lipham points out that a leader is primarily concerned with the creation of new structures or procedures for achieving group or organizational goals, while the main function of the administrator is simply to utilize existing structures and procedures to achieve exisiting institutional objectives. He describes the leader as disruptive of the current state of affairs and the administrator as a stabilizing force. In a school setting, it

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would be rare to find an individual consistently playing one role. Ideally, a school leader *chooses* to alternate between roles as the situation dictates.

Early Leadership Theories

Leadership is not a phenomenon which can be easily analyzed and/or quantified. The question of what consititutes good and effective leadership has been studied for many years. Perhaps the most comprehensive current summary of such studies is that of Bernard Bass and Robert Stogdill (1990). Prior to 1945, it was believed that all leaders shared certain identifiable personality traits. This idea is now considered inadequate because so many different kinds of people can and have demonstrated leadership ability. It is impossible to identify certain common traits which leaders have and others lack.

Scientific management theory emerged early in the century and had organizational efficiency as its goal (Taylor, 1911). It held that good leadership was that which best organized work and workers so as to maximize production. This viewpoint was totally task oriented and focused upon the needs of the organization. While this view of leadership is known to be inadequate because it overlooks the human elements of organizations, it has had considerable staying-power. We have neo-scientific management today as a school of thought, for example, and the so-called accountability movement in education is based upon scientific management principles despite the fact that those principles have been found wanting (Callahan, 1962).

Human relations leadership developed in the 1920s as a reaction to the impersonal nature of the scientific management approach. Based upon the assumption that the interpersonal relations in an organization determine its effectiveness, the goal of the approach was seen as producing worker satisfaction. Thus, the focus was on the needs of individuals in the organization (Mayo, 1945).

Beginning in the 1950s, a growing number of studies turned their attention to leader *behavior*. This was parallel to the powerful overall behavioral movement in psychology and education which held that all observable phenomena could be understood by (1) breaking them down into their component parts, and (2) studying the parts.

Behavioral studies in the area of leadership led to a number of useful models. The simplest one identified three basic approaches to leadership in the behavior of leaders who were studied: (1) *authoritarian* which is characterized as directive and task oriented, (2) *democratic* which is seen as participative and process- and relationship-

oriented, and *laissez-faire* which is said to be non-directive and lacking in formal leadership (Lewin, Lippitt, White, 1960).

Douglas McGregor(1960) developed the now famous Theory X/Theory Y model in which he posits that Theory X leadership resembles authoritarian behavior and was based on the assumption that the power of the leader came from the position he or she occupies, and that people are basically lazy and unreliable. Conversely, Theory Y leadership resembled democratic behavior and assumes that the power of leaders is granted to them by those they were to lead, and that people ware basically self-directed and creative if properly motivated. In addition, the theory suggests a self-fulfilling prophecy. If leaders behave toward people in the organization as if they are lazy, uncreative, in need of control, and so forth, they become so. On the other hand, when treated as creative, self-directed, and so forth, they are seen to take on these characteristics.

Subsequently, Chris Argyris(1971) identifies two sets of leadership behaviors which he called A and B. He distinguishes these from Theory X and Y attitudes and suggests that A behaviors usually (but not always) go with X attitudes. Pattern A includes not owning up to feelings, not being open, rejecting experimentation, and not helping others to engage in these behaviors. It is characterized by close supervision and a high degree of structure. Pattern B leaders, on the other hand, are seen to behave in more supportive and facilitiative ways. They are thought to own up to their feelings, they are open and experimenting, and they help others to engage in these behaviors. Argyris posits that such behaviors tend to create organizational norms of trust, concern, and creativity.

Behavioral Studies and Theories

A series of behavioral studies of leadership were initiated at Ohio State University in 1945 and resulted in the development of the Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire (LBDQ) (Stogdill and Coons, 1957). The two major dimensions of this instrument are "initiating structure" and "consideration," with each of those divided into six sub-dimensions (e.g., production emphasis, persuasiveness and superior orientation for "initiating structure" and demand reconciliation, tolerance of freedom and tolerance of uncertainty for "consideration"). The critical thing about these studies was that they identify distinct dimensions of leadership which can be described separately or in combination.

At the Survey Research Center at the University of Michigan a series of studies likewise identified two distinct dimensions of leadership behavior: "employee orientation" and "production orientation." Using these concepts, Rensis Likert(1961) conducted a series of studies and determined that employee-centered leaders had better performance records than those who were job-centered. He found that "supervisors with the best records of performance focus their primary attention on human aspects of their subordinates' problems and on endeavoring to build effective work groups with high performance goals."

Ultimately, through his studies, Likert(1967) developed a continuum of management styles in organizations. System 1 he characterized as a task-oriented, highly structured and authoritarian style; Sytem 4 as a relationship-oriented style based upon teamwork and trust. He presented Systems 2 and 3 as intermediate stages between the two extremes (1967). Systems 1 and 4, respectively, approximate Macgregor's Theory X and Theory Y.

Situational Leadership

Behavioral approaches to the study of leadership have been influential in shaping our thinking about organizations. However, current theory has moved beyond these earlier theories to include consideration of the *situation* as well as the behaviors of both leaders and followers.

Fred Fiedler is widely known for his "leadership contingency theory" (1967). According to this theory, three variables have to be considered by a leader who is deciding what behavior is most effective at a given time: (1) his or her personal relations with the members of the group, (2) the amount of structure in the task, and (3) the degree of position-power the leader has. Fiedler developed eight possible combinations of these variables and ultimately concluded that task-oriented leadership is more appropriate when the situation was either very favorable or very unfavorable, and the relationship-oriented style of leadership is more appropriate when the situation is neither one nor the other, but somewhere in between.

The situational theory which is most applied currently to the research and practice of leadership in education is that of Hersey and Blachard (1988). In this model, the terms *task behavior* and *relationship behavior* are used to describe concepts similar to "initiating structure" and "consideration" of the Ohio State Studies. In addition, another dimension which is important to the situation has been introduced: the *maturity* of the group with which the leader is working. The notion is that the

effectiveness of leaders depends upon their selecting the appropriate class of behavior in light of the maturity of the group. The major difference between this theory and most others already discussed is that in this theory any of the basic styles may be effective or ineffective, depending on the situation. In other theories there is generally the assumption that there is one consistently *best* leadership behavior.

The leadership theories discussed thus far are normative. That is, they address the issue of what leadership *should* be: how leaders should behave. The question, of course, is, "How *do* leaders behave?"

Argyris(1962) suggests that bureaucratic/pyramidal values, comparable to Theory X assumptions discussed earlier, dominate most organizations. He states that such values lead to poor, shallow, and mistrustful relationships which, in turn, result in decreased interpersonal competence. According to Argyris, today's organizations are usually created to achieve goals that are best met collectively. However, management most often determines how these goals are to be achieved. Thus, the design comes first and individuals are to be fitted to the job. The design is based upon four concepts of scientific management: task specialization, chain of command, unity of direction, and span of control.

Hersey and Blanchard summarize this view of Argyris' as follows:

> Management tries to increase and enhance organizational and administrative efficiency and productivity by making workers "interchangeable parts."
>
> Basic to these concepts is that power and authority should rest in the hands of a few at the top of the organization, and thus those at the lower end of the chain of command are strictly controlled by their superiors or the system itself. Task specialization often results in the oversimplification of the job so that it becomes repetitive, routine, and unchallenging. This implies directive, task-oriented leadership where decisions about the work are made by the superior, with the workers only carrying out those decisions.
>
> This type of leadership evokes managerial controls such as budgets, some incentive systems, time and motion studies, and standard operating procedures, which can restrict the initiative and creativity of workers. (1988, p. 61)

Those who wish to know what it takes to bring a global perspective to the curriculum of a school need to be aware that Argyris' description is pretty accurate when applied to today's schools. The implication is quite clear: not only does the curriculum need to be changed, but our basic ideas about the management of the institution of school need to be rethought as well. It is one thing to *talk* about school-based management, restructuring, teacher empowerment, and the like. It is quite

another to expect people to actually give up power and control over such things as budget and curriculum. Very few school administrators today see their roles as ones of facilitating the work of others. Most see themselves as making the decisions that others carry out. Current notions of scientific and Theory X management are such a part of the deep structure of schooling that they most often go unchallenged.

Our school systems *are* bureaucracies. As such, they encourage and reward vertical orientation, and consequently most school principals tend to behave as administrators rather than as leaders. They utilize existing structures or procedures to achieve existing goals set by the superordinate system and they are rewarded for this vertical orientation. We are reminded of the presentation of a well-respected superintendent of schools several years ago who was addressing a group of principals at a conference on school innovation. He exhorted them to "change anything you want, just don't rock the boat." As absurd as this admonition is, it demonstrates the tremendous pressure placed upon principals to conform to the dictates of the superordinate system.

Goal Orientation of Principals

In our global education study, the following kinds of data were collected from and about the principals:

1. Informal observations during visits to the schools, including planned staff meetings, interactions in the faculty lounges, and scheduled meetings with principals about global education activities at the schools.

2. Informal observations at networkwide administrator meetings for principals only and at other meetings with district administrators and representative teachers.

3. Structured interviews with principals about global education activities at their schools.

4. Informal observations of principals at networkwide teacher inservice activities.

5. Structured interview and questionnaire responses from teachers about their principals.

On the basis of these data, it was hypothesized that the critical indicator of principal leadership was what came to be called her/his "goal style." With regard to goals for the school, the principal was seen as either *focused*, *diffuse*, or *coping*.

The Focused Principal. The *focused* principal seemed to be able to (1) articulate a few, carefully selected goals for the school; and (2) work diligently to accomplish those goals. Such principals were able to set forth clear visions of *what* schools were supposed to do and *why*. They also seemed able to find ways to help their schools to approximate these visions. Being able to go beyond the simple concern for what works and/or how to keep school is what seemed to distinguish focused principals from others. Sergiovanni (1987) points out that the ability of leaders to communicate their values and beliefs to others in a way that provides meaning is highly significant in the shaping of a school and its culture.

There were eleven schools in the study. Six of them had principal changes during the four years of the project. Thus, there was a total of 17 principals who worked with CHI. Of this number, six principals were seen as focused. Two of these were able to clearly articulate goals related to global education, two felt strongly about the development of multicultural awareness because of the demographic changes occurring at their schools, one had strong progressive ideals and saw active learning and integrative experiences as critical to quality education, and one had firm convictions about academic excellence. Except in the latter case, these were the principals who saw the value of global education as a means toward furthering their own goals. Because of this, they supported the project vigorously. It was these *focused* principals who seemed to most clearly understand the meaning of global education and who could see how it could help them achieve their own goals. Further, it was these schools which ultimately came closest to bringing a global perspective to the curriculum.

The manner through which this process occurred is amply demonstrated by the following field note written by a CHI staff member after an informal meeting with one principal:

> *"As we walked out with (the principal) to get a master schedule, he further told us about his international experience: his daughter was going to school in England and she somehow was connected with a group of international students from various countries. She was helping them become accustomed to the U.S. culture. Thus, these students were coming in and out of his home a lot.*
>
> *"He also said that his was a very religious family and that he had some experience with right-wing fundamentalists who are opposed to global thinking. . .*
>
> *"He also shared that it took him a number of years to decide how his personal thoughts and feelings differed and or fit into some*

of these ideas and that now he knows his own personal balance in this area. . .

He's done his homework in thinking through what he believes."

Focused principals often had more than one goal. However, the number was generally limited and, in every case, *very* well articulated to teachers, community, the district and others. In many instances, if the principal had been in place for awhile, many teachers had been hired who were in sympathy with these articulated and focused goals. In fact, three of these principals, in end-of-project interviews, pointed to the hiring of teachers sympathetic to their goals as a major accomplishment.

The Diffuse Principal. Another five principals were seen as having a *diffuse* goal focus. That is, they worked at keeping themselves at least somewhat informed about trends in schooling and they frequently articulated school goals in terms of such trends. The result was often a myriad of goals, often changing, and sometimes even in conflict.

At Central High, for example, in the third year of the project, a full day of student free release time for teachers had been planned for several months for global education inservice. Little by little, additional items came to occupy the agenda. Even after CHI personnel arrived at the school, they found more changes in the day's program. Two weeks before the meeting a speaker on teenage suicide was added to the program. A presentation on the state education budget was felt to be important enough to take an hour, forty-five minutes went to information on progress toward the upcoming accreditation, and the principal felt it necessary to present an "end of year activities update." After all was said and done, about an an hour went to global education.

Commenting on this same principal, one of the long-time staff members said: *"(This principal). . .tries to have a lot of opportunities available to the kids. In fact, he has about four million programs going on at Central and he pushes each of them. This is a wonderful opportunity for the kids and the teachers."*

Each of the principals who seemed to be in this category spoke in favor of global education to his or her faculty, often with enthusiasm. However, as time went on it became apparent that several other competing goals also were articulated. Many teachers at these schools told CHI staff that they initially responded cautiously to the project because they saw their principal as attracted to fads and they just didn't have time for "every new thing that came along." At these schools, the idea of *competing demands* was quite prominent and such demands were often pointed to as a reason for non-participation in global education. These principals seemed less able to see how

global education might relate to other goals and, in fact, even seemed less apt to truly understand what global education was. They appeared to be attracted to it, at least in part, because it was seen as an "innovation."

The Coping Principal. The final six principals were seen as having a *coping* goal focus. Their behavior was similar to that of the *administrator* described earlier by Lipham. That is, they focused on managing the school, on seeing that things ran as smoothly as possible. Little, if any, concern was expressed by these principals for substantive issues.

To one degree or another, coping principals tended to only respond to directives from their districts. They certainly were loath to initiate anything without checking first with superordinates. In the end-of-project survey, teachers clearly felt that these principals' goals were those supported, rewarded, and/or dictated by the district administration.

Field notes also showed that such principals often placed district rules and requirements ahead of school-site needs or wishes. Examples of such notes were:

> *"He apologized for not being at the Department Chairs meeting he'd promised to attend, citing a district meeting which interfered."*
>
> *"She wanted to screen all the mini-grant proposals before teachers submitted them to CHI to be sure that no one was planning to do anything that would "make waves" at the district office. . ."*
>
> *"Teachers said the principal was the one who had "let the project in" at their school. Several said they didn't really believe it when they were told that participation would be their decision. They always look upward for cues as to expectations and rewards. . ."*

These principals seemed not to initiate new programs on their own. They tended to react to things *as they came along.* They expressed support to their faculties for the CHI project, at least in the presence of CHI staff members, However, in every case, these were the principals who frequently did not follow through on commitments and/or who needed reminders about activities and things which needed to be done.

As it turned out, the five schools in which these six people were principals were the ones which accounted for the lowest levels of teacher participation in the project. In some cases, teachers expressed very negative feelings about these principals. For example, the following statements were recorded:

"He is just marking time, waiting to retire."

"He'll do whatever makes him look good to the district and the parents."

"He just wants things to run smoothly. He doesn't want to stir things up."

Such statements, alone, do not prove anything. However, when seen as part of a pattern of resistance to new ideas, lack of enthusiasm, and the like, they give an indication of the culture of a school. Others have emphasized the inseparable relationship between leadership and culture (Sarason, 1982; Schein, 1985).

The idea that the style of goal orientation of the principal is critical to his or her leadership and to the culture of a school is suggested here as an hypothesis to be tested further in other settings. It seems related to the behavioral theories of leadership discussed at the beginning of this chapter. Further, it seems to combine the normative outlook of those theories and the descriptive and pragmatic orientation of situational theories. The latter are quite useful but tend to emphasize management behavior to at least the partial exclusion of important value questions -- e.g., why should we teach certain things?

District Ethos and the Principalship

Most school systems treat their schools in fairly standardized ways and communication and expectations tend to be top-down. This is very much like the bureaucratic design described earlier by Argyris with its neo-scientific management concepts of interchangeable parts, task specialization, chain of command, unity of direction, and span of control.

The *interchangeable parts* nature of school districts, for example, was dramatically demonstrated in this study. Six of the eight districts in the project had conscious policies of rotating principals every so often. No single policy can more assure principal loyalty to the superordinate system rather than to the school than this one. Such systems require that middle managers, as principals are often called, behave as administrators rather than leaders and they encourage *coping* rather than *focused* behavior. In fact, focused leadership behavior can be seen in some instances as threatening to the system.

Situational leadership theories do not now adequately take into account this pervasive, deep structure characteristic of our school systems. Many of those which speak of school-based management, decentralized decision-making, empowerment of

teachers, and the like, do not either. Further study of goal orientation should show us the degree to which it is even possible to create schools which are truly able to be innovative, and in which principals, with their faculties, can choose and pursue their own relevant goals.

One leadership theory which has not been mentioned thus far seems appropriate to consider here. That is distributive or functional leadership (Johnson and Johnson, 1987). Based upon a substantial body of research on small group behavior, it suggests that group goals are best accomplished and group members are better satisfied when leadership acts are carried out according to (1) needs of the group and (2) strengths of its members (Bales, 1950). This theory, closely related in orientation to the Ohio State and Michigan studies cited earlier, has much relevance for any discussion of principal leadership. It suggests that, while on the one hand a formal leader such as a principal should have well articulated and focused goals (a vision of how the school should be), such goals will be better accomplished if they are shared by other members of the staff and if these other members also perform leadership acts as appropriate. This cannot happen if neoscientific management principles dominate in a school district and individual schools and their faculties are treated as interchangeable parts. Global educators should not be naive about this matter. They must assess the management philosophy of the school district and determine appropriate strategies for bringing a global perspective to the curriculum of a school. This would involve such things as getting special consideration for a school to practice real teacher involvement in decision-making, getting dispensation for the school from district curricula and even testing, and even confronting district administrators about their management styles.

Conclusion

If a principal is focused and the focus includes global education, the interventionist has little to worry about. If, however, the focus does *not* include global education, there is some educating and influencing to be done. If, as was suggested earlier, a principal has a diffuse or coping style, the role of the interventionist is to assist with helping him or her to become more focused.

It is also important to assess the leadership behavior of the principal. Does he tend to behave as a leader or as an administrator? Does she vary her task and relationship behavior appropriately according to the situation? Are Theory X or Theory Y assumptions pervasive at the school? The assessment of such leadership factors should

also assist both the interventionists and the principals with the planning of various types of inservice activities.

Any concern for leadership must also take into account the district ethos. It is appropriate to be concerned with the goal focus of principals. However, as we have seen, in school districts where the currently popular neoscientific principles of management prevail, it is unlikely that principals will hold anything other than Theory X assumptions or perform as anything other than administrators. In such situations, in which the idea of interchangeable parts is so strong, to encourage principals to do otherwise might jeopardize their jobs. In such cases, and there are probably many, interventionists must work first with the superordinate system to assure that principals actually will be given the latitude to become leaders in their schools and not simply be expected to administer what has been mandated from above.

In the final analysis, then, we are led back to the hypothesis which was stated earlier and which arises from the consideration of the pivotal role of the principal. That hypothesis simply states that if we are interested in real school improvement, not just cosmetic change, a major focus for the outside agency and the superordinate system has to be upon helping people at the school site, foremost among them the principal, to clarify and develop their own vision and meanings. Such vision and meanings cannot successfully be imposed from above or from outside. The task for the global educator is to assist school leaders to see that their vision reflects the changing nature of the world and to support them in every way possible as they work to bring a global perspective to the curriculum of the school.

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